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1. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1997; 277: 1033-1036.

1. *Journal of Management Studies*, 1997, 34, 1, 1-14.

A LETTER,

&c. &c.


MYSTERIOUS SIR,

PERMIT me, in common with numberless admirers of your various and profound talents, to lament the ignorance in which you have left them respecting the name of so illustrious an author.

The appearance of so bright a Luminary in the horizon of our polemical hemisphere, has naturally attracted the gaze and astonishment of all who are familiar with such objects.

Many have been the doubts, and ingenious the conjectures, as to the rank in which you should be placed ; some imagining (on what authority I know not) that they see in you a Comet, whose appearance—long foretold—by some strange accident had ceased to be expected : some believing you a Star till lately undiscovered ; and others—with a stronger and more perfect show of reason—considering you a Planet wandering from your sphere, and giving but a transient radiance to our world !

To myself—after much consideration on a question of so vast importance—the last has seemed the true conclusion ; and without assuming a superior wisdom in discernment of such matters, I will boldly undertake to show *your real appellation* to any who may seek for an acquaintance with it.



But to relieve you from the anxiety which you must naturally experience as to the subject and purpose of the present letter, I shall waive all further preface, and proceed to a disclosure of my object in addressing you.

The fund of doctrine—strength of evidence—and glow of irresistible persuasion, exhibited to the world in your late polemical effusions, induce me to submit to your *pious* consideration, the following simple observations.

Though little accustomed to indulge in the effervescence of party-feeling, I have not been altogether an unobservant spectator of the practical results amongst mankind, which are the necessary emanations of the church whose Champion you so *ably* maintain yourself.

This, I, in some measure attribute to having visited, at different times, those regions of the globe, in which she holds a paramount importance, and thus become more intimate, than might otherwise have been, with the actual tendency of her doctrines; but chiefly to that glaring and unnatural light by which she arrests the attention, and compels each individual, however reluctant, to look on her with serious inquiry.

While far from approving all the proceedings of your opponents in those lengthened discussions which have agitated the public mind, and the injudiciousness of some of which has—I fear—too frequently conceded “‘vantage ground” to the weaker and less worthy cause; I am yet convinced, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that it would require the exercise of the utmost ingenuity, not only of the *fictitious* “PASTORINI,” but of the Bishop of Siga

himself, or even of that Prince of Impostors—the miracle-working HOHENLOHE, to fairly meet the case which I subjoin.

Protestant writers have fallen into a snare, very artfully laid for them by their Popish opponents, of discussing whether St. Peter was himself the Rock on which the Church was built. This discussion has already lasted some centuries, and is still undecided. I put all this aside at once, and confidently ask, *What has St. Peter to do with the Romish Church?* Neither will I waste the attention of my readers by drawing arguments from the Fathers, who, with all their excellencies, are necessarily, more or less, fallible. I come to the infallible writings of an acknowledged Pope.

Principal and foremost of the arrogant assumptions of that system, which supplies you with your honors and emoluments, is—‘it’s claim of the apostle—St. Peter—as it’s first Pope.’ I feel that I am authorised to make use of that assumption as a ground for the following inquiry.

1st.—Can the rich store-house of your ecclesiastical memory, or the history of the world, produce even a single instance of a great Reformer—contemplating the structure of a system—to be entitled, at a future period, to the proud and triumphant appellation of UNIVERSAL,—to swallow up all others—and ultimately obtain throughout the earth, writing publicly and copiously on various topics, and yet, in no one page or line recording such an act—or even recommending to mankind the system he himself had founded?

In order to assist you in replying to this question, allow me to recall to your recollection a few of the

leading dispensations which at different periods had been established. To begin with the earliest, the **LEVITICAL**, of which Moses was the institutor, and which we accordingly find fully and particularly recorded in the books of which he was the author. Next let me advert to the principles of that dispensation, as revived in the schools of the **PROPHETS**, whose names are made familiar to us in the Old-Testament writings. After this the **CHRISTIAN** economy, as ushered in with all the majesty of **HIM** "Who spake as never man spake," and who had surely the strongest and best established claims to exhibit Himself as a Teacher to the World. His doctrines, tenets, and principles, He has left us at no loss for materials to comprehend, having given them in rich and becoming detail in those sublime discourses which have been transmitted to us pure and unadulterated from the pen of Inspiration. And if from this we advance to the memorable period, when the Sun of the glorious Reformation arose in triumphant splendour to dissipate a chaos of gloomy superstition, which had long been lowering over the Church, and obscuring and perverting her sacred doctrines and discipline—the morning Stars of the bright day which has since succeeded, I mean Wicliffe and his coadjutors and successors, Luther, Calvin, and others, have faithfully recorded their doctrinal views on the subject, which absorbed their time and talents; nor have even Popes and Councils themselves been wanting in anxiety to communicate to the world and to posterity, their strong and decided opinions relative to the views maintained by them on ecclesiastical points: nor are these all—for it were easy to adduce from the ranks of even hea-

then teachers, many who, like Plato and Socrates, have written expressly on their systems, and defined, in sufficiently explicit language, the nature of those systems to mankind.

I should deem myself deficient in a proper respect for your great learning and superior sense, were I, after this, to suspect your professing an ability to comply with so prodigious a demand as that which I have made on you. I shall therefore consider you as granting that this at least is not within your power, and proceed to ask,

Secondly,—Whether has the Church of Rome in her possession any of her *first Pope's* writings, sufficient to establish her pretensions to the peculiar points at issue, and which draw the line of demarcation between her and the Reformed Religion; and if so, *Is* it prudent, at a time when their production might effectually silence opposition, to withhold such writings from the world? That so zealous an advocate as yourself should deny her the privilege of these documents, had you even been informed of their existence, I cannot for a moment believe; treating therefore your silence as a proof that you do not know them, the fact of *your* ignorance affords a tolerably fair presumption that they never existed; at all events I boldly challenge their production.

Taking it then for granted that you are unable to adduce any valid evidence, possessed by your venerated Mother Church, in support of her extraordinary and unparalleled theories, we will now proceed to examine the writings of your reputed first Pope, which are acknowledged to be authentic by both Churches; and if the most scrutinizing and attentive reader (even of the Douay and Rhemish

versions) can discover in his inspired Epistles, any of the peculiar doctrines and tenets which constitute the essential distinction of your Church, then indeed may that Church establish some claim to the subject of her present boast, viz.—That the Apostle, St. Peter, was her first and legitimate Pope. If however on the other hand, none of those doctrines or tenets are discoverable in the Epistles; Is it not fairly to be inferred that the Holy Apostle never sanctioned the blasphemous and irreligious tenets so strenuously held by the Church of Rome, and that to impute to him the invention of such, is a gross and shameful libel on his memory; and may I not with justice accuse your Church of having incurred the heavy and awful curse of adding to the Word of God?*

The following are among the tenets to which I particularly allude, viz. AURICULAR CONFESSION—MASSES—PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD—PENANCES—PILGRIMAGES—INDULGENCES—PRAYERS FOR THE INTERCESSION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS—POWER OF THE KEYS IN THE ROMISH SENSE—WORSHIP OF IMAGES—INFALLIBILITY OF THE ROMISH SYSTEM—AND THE GREAT AND ALL COMPREHENSIVE VOLUME OF ABSURDITY—TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

These are the appendages which human trick has annexed to the pure faith which was “once delivered unto the saints,” and to the inventors of such dexterity may be fairly applied the strong and just animadversion of the following quotation—

* “If any man shall add to these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this Book.” Rev. xii. chap. 18 v.

"Religion's lustre is by native innocence
 Divinely pure and simple from all arts ;
 You daub and dress her like a common mistress—
 The harlot of your fancies—and by adding
 False beauties, which she wants not, make the world
 Suspect her angel-face is foul beneath,
 And will not bear all lights."———

[See motto on the title-page.]

To multiply arguments, where one so simple and so powerful as that which I have stated can be brought against your religion, were alike superfluous and unprofitable. On yourself and the supporters in general of the papal system, must be rolled the onus of proving, from the writings of your own acknowledged Pope, any sanction for that fearful system ; and until this shall be done to the perfect satisfaction of your simple-hearted hearers, you ought to be proclaimed in every cottage and in every Church, a body of the worst impostors, deceiving the people, and not affording to your hearers, the TRUTH, the WHOLE TRUTH, and NOTHING but the TRUTH. And here, should you feel disposed to adopt your usual subterfuge of retreating into the gloomy phantasmagoria of your ideal or unwritten authority—*Tradition*,—I must, in justice to the cause which I advocate, deprive you of even that last resource, by availing myself of your own admissions, That though there may be traditional authority in connexion with the written, yet that oral evidence, whatever be its claims to antiquity, can in no case invalidate a written and authentic statement ; and inasmuch as your Tradition would admit the objectionable tenets, a catalogue of which I have already given, in direct opposition to the acknowledged records of St. Peter, it follows as of course that you

cannot rest your claims upon this sandy foundation, on which your fabric totters, and which, "when the rains descend, and the floods come, and the winds blow, and beat upon that house, it shall fall, and great shall be the fall of it."

If this, as I am well assured, be the conclusion to which sound reason and Scripture must conduct us, and should it be proved beyond dispute, that you and all your priestly Confreres, are spiritual conjurors and cheats: let me ask another question.

Thirdly,—With what pretensions, and what show of common justice, do you seek political concession? If the object of a wise and enlightened government be the maintenance of pure and salutary laws, influencing the morals of its subjects and claiming their authority from the enactments of a Supreme God; Is it safe—is it sound and wholesome policy, to admit into the number of its legislators, persons who reject the Revelation of that God, and, substituting vain and sinful precepts of their own devising, "make it of none effect by their Tradition?"

An impartial perusal of the late excellent and unanswerable letters of my noble and right honorable friend—**LORD KENYON**, and his Grace the **DUKE OF NEWCASTLE**, will immediately suggest a reply.

But that my objections to the grant of further political privileges to your Community, in their unconverted state, may not appear invidious, I beg to refer for my reasons to the following petition which I had the honor of signing in that ever-memorable and hallowed spot—the town of **LUTTERWORTH** in England, where it was my privilege to stand in the very pulpit of **WICLIFFE**, and where I had the

mourful opportunity of crossing the river, into which your predecessors of the same community, cast the ashes of his bones, having burned them forty years after his interment. These are "*ardentia verba*," and worthy of your considerate attention.

" *To the Honourable the House of Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled.*

" *The humble petition of the Inhabitants of Lutterworth, in the County of Leicester, and its Vicinity.*

" *Sheweth,*

" That your Petitioners consider it their bounden duty, in common with the great body of their PROTESTANT fellow-subjects, humbly but firmly to unite in upholding the *Protestant Constitution*, as established by Law in these Realms.

" That fully convinced of the propriety and necessity of permitting every man to worship GOD agreeably to the conviction of his own conscience, they rejoice in the ample Toleration which has been granted to their Roman Catholic fellow-subjects.

" That they beg to PROTEST, in the most decided manner, against the further concession of Political and Legislative Authority to the members of the Romish Church :—They PROTEST, upon the fullest conviction (which the history of many centuries confirms) That the *Exclusive* character of the Romish Church and its pretensions to *Infallibility* have always rendered, and must continue always to render it Intolerant, Tyrannical, and Persecuting.

" Your Petitioners cannot contemplate Measures which have been recently pursued, and which are now pursued by

the Church of Rome and its zealous adherents, without feeling a full assurance that the *Spirit* of their Religion remains unchanged : The zeal and violence with which the dawnings of civil and religious light, are opposed—The re-establishment of the *Inquisition*, and of that most pestilent religious Sect, the *Order of the Jesuits*, whose political intrigues and factious conduct, once endangered nearly every Throne in Europe—The *Anathemas* with which their *Rhemish Testament*, the only one allowed to the Roman Catholics, continues to abound against “ *The Translators of the English Protestant Bible*, against all PROTESTANTS, and “ *Protestant Clergy, as Thieves and Ministers of the Devil*,” as “ *Heretics*,” the shedding of whose “ *blood is no more than that of thieves and man-killers*,” and all of whom it would be praise-worthy in the Holy Church to put “ to death,”—Your Petitioners viewing these with many similar evils, cannot but feel convinced that, as *Protestants* never have been, so they never can be safe where political power is lodged in the hands of Roman Catholics.

“ That your Petitioners as PROTESTANTS, and admirers of the venerable JOHN WICLIFFE, the morning Sta of the Reformation, beg humbly to represent to your Honourable House, that they consider the grants of money by the British Government to certain Schools or Colleges, whose peculiar object is to instruct Youth in the Roman Catholic religion, is questionable in Policy, and dangerous and inadmissible in Religion.

“ That your Petitioners consider the Protestant ascendancy, established in this United Kingdom, as equally inviolable with the rights of Britons contained in Magna Charta, and the Habeas Corpus Act—and they humbly but urgently request your Honourable House, peremptorily to reject all applications for the granting any further Political and Legislative authority to the members of the *Romish Church* in these Realms.

“ *And your Petitioners will ever pray.* ”

But that I may afford you a very reasonable opportunity of giving a reply to the preceding observations, it may not be amiss at the end of my address to recapitulate the substance of my argument. The case stands thus ; your Church has long and obstinately persisted in maintaining the articles to which I have adverted ; the Reformed Church turns it's face from these, and calls upon the world to renounce them. Your Church attempts to impose upon the credulous, by professing an authority for her folly and delusive practices, on the antiquity and greatness of which she relies for support in establishing her title—Her foundation, she states, is on the Apostle St. Peter, who received his appointment immediately from the Saviour, and planted the Romish System. Having then derived her religion from St. Peter—from him she must also have derived it's various tenets—The Apostle was the Author of several Epistles, in none of which, as I contend, is any mention made of the foregoing doctrines, &c. of the Romish Church : either then your Church has some writings in her possession which were left by the Apostle, and which furnish a History of its system, or ALL her pretensions to so sacred an origin are “ like the baseless fabric of a vision,” and ere long shall prove to every beholder, but the transient brilliance of the rainbow, gilding for a moment the outskirts of the tempest, but quickly succeeded by the mists of Egyptian darkness—“ Darkness that must be *felt*.”—But shall she triumph in the chaos thus produced ? No ! thank Heaven ! From the cloud of her own gathering there already may be heard a voice—and soon shall it have reached her whole deluded offspring, saying in mild accents of mercy

and illumination, " Arise ! Shine ! for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is arisen upon thee. "

In conclusion, let me earnestly intreat your perusal of the Epistles of St. Peter, as preserved in the Inspired Volume; with the notes of differences between the translations. Let me beg that you will compare them attentively with the original, and if, on such perusal and comparison, you are able to detect a variance between it and our version, that you will immediately expose it to the world. But if, as I believe, that endeavour shall be fruitless, then I adjure you, by the terrors of the Law, and the persuasions of the Gospel ! by the great—the solemn—and most awful responsibility attached to the office which you fill, and by the worth of the souls of the millions of immortals entrusted to your charge ! no longer to continue deceived and deceiving ; but to divert without delay the tide of all your talents and influence into that purer channel, which I doubt not shall largely contribute to swell the bosom of that bottomless ocean, whose risings, already beginning to overflow their limits, shall, ere long, complete the fulfilment of the prophetic simile, " The knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters " cover the sea."

Hoping that a serious perusal of this letter may cause us to meet here on the principles of sound faith and wholesome learning, and hereafter with the Universal Church whose names are written in Heaven,

I remain, Sir,

In the bonds of Christian Charity,

Your sincere well-wisher,

G. M. WEST.

P. S. Since writing the above letter, I have met with the following passage in the "Homily of Obedience," and it would not be easy to give a more concise proof, that my Argument is in perfect accordance with our venerable Reformers.

"Concerning the usurped Power of the Bishop of Rome, which he most wrongfully challengeth as the Successor of Christ and Peter, we may easily perceive how false, feigned, and forged it is, not only in that it hath *no sufficient ground in Holy Scripture*, but also by the fruits and doctrine thereof. For our Saviour Christ and St. Peter teach most earnestly obedience to Kings as to the chief and supreme Rulers in this world, next under God. But the Bishop of Rome teacheth that they that are under him are free from all burdens and charges of the Commonwealth, and obedience towards their Prince, most clearly against Christ's doctrine and St. Peter's. He ought therefore rather to be called *Antichrist*, and *the Successor of the Scribes and Pharisees*, than Christ's Vicar, and St. Peter's Successor; seeing that not only in this point, but also in other weighty matters of Christian Religion—in matters of Remission and Forgiveness of Sins, and of Salvation—he teacheth directly against both St. Peter, and against our Saviour Christ."—*Third Part of the Homily of Obedience.*





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